(e) Cases relating to marriage and family affairs and matters connected therewith shall be entrusted to the family courts. The benefits of this set up include speedy and inexpensive settlement of disputes relating to matrimonial and family affairs in an informal atmosphere.

Upgradation of Technology in DD and AIR

*677. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO. Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the major initiatives proposed to be taken by her Ministry with regard to upgradation of technology in DD and AIR in the Tenth Five Year Plan; and

(b) the target fixed for coverage of FM Radio Service in the Tenth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Technology initiatives envisaged in the Tenth Five Year Plan for AIR include Internet Broadcasting Digital Broadcasting in Terrestrial/Satellite mode, expansion of FM transmission network, conversion of existing analogue production and delivery systems to digital mode in order to provide superior quality programmes to listeners and to further improve the coverage area. For Doordarshan, these include TV coverage for uncovered areas through transmission in Ku-Band, Digital Terrestrial Transmission, digitalization of production facilities and automated operation of studios and transmitters.

(b) All India Radio proposes to cover 60% of population through FM Radio Service by the end of the Tenth Plan.

Non-lapsable pool

*678. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) the background of forming the non-lapsable pool of resources, total amount accrued in the non-lapsable pool of resources since its inception, criteria fixed for disbursement of fund and amount disbursed till March, 2002, State-wise;

(b) whether Government of Assam has proposed for funding the implementing agency directly for implementation of State roads as is the practice for National Highways;

(c) if not, the response therefor; and

(d) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) The then Prime Minister's announcement in October, 1996 regarding new initiatives for the North Eastern Region, *inter-alia*, envisaged earmarking 10% of the Budget of the Union Ministries/Department for specific programmes in the North Eastern Region. The Union Government in December, 1997 decided to constitute a Central Pool of Resources out of unspent amount from 10% of the Budget of the Union Ministries/Departments. The following Departments have been exempted from this requirement:

1. Expenditure;
2. Revenue;
3. Planning;
4. Ocean Development;
5. Space;
6. Supply;
7. Atomic Energy;
8. Economic Affairs;
9. External Affairs;
10. Petroleum and Natural Gas;
11. Sugar and Edible Oils;
12. Steel;
13. Legal Affairs;
14. Personnel and Training;
15. Bio-Technology;
16. Science and Technology;
17. Scientific and Industrial Research; and
18. Official Language.

In case of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the exemption is limited to the programmes of Scheduled Caste Division, where, instead of 10% only 2% is required to be earmarked. In respect of all other programmes, the Ministry is required to earmark the stipulated 10% of the Budget for the North East and Sikkim.

The Non-lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) became operational during the financial year 1998-1999. The broad objective of NLCPR is to ensure the speedy development of the North Eastern Region and Sikkim. The

NLCPR focuses on taking up appropriate projects which would reduce the gaps in Basic Minimum Services (BMS) and infrastructure in the Region.

A Committee has been constituted to administer the NLCPR. Taking into consideration the merit of the project proposals received for assistance under the Pool, the Committee makes recommendations for assistance from the Central Pool. The project proposals accompanied by Detailed Project Reports submitted by the State Governments/Union Ministries and Depa..ments should meet the following conditions for consideration of a project under the NLCPR:

(i) The proposals should be for financing capital projects, or improving utilisation of existing assets;

(ii) The proposals should be cleared from all administrative and regulatory angles;

(iii) The project outlay should be more than Rs. 1 crore;

(iv) The post of land acquisition is not eligible for funding under the Central Pool.

Detailed guidlines have been formulated for implementation of Non-lapsable Central Pool of Resources.

By 31.3.2002 Rs. 1346.72 crores have been released from the Central Pool for various projects in the North East and Sikkim. Details are given below:

(Rs. in crores)

State	Funds Released				
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	Total
Arunachal Pradesh	15.00	19.65	43.96	74.24	152.85
Assam	28.81	105.86	69.31	89.18	293.16
Manipur	20.34	121.67	23.85	18.56	184.42
Meghalaya	8.79	3.00	32.63	22.39	66.81
Mizoram	9.00	62.15	27.06	69.86	168.07
Nagaland	20.01	44.08	15.91	52.16	132.16
Sikkim	10.00	32.01	23.78	49.71	115.50
Tripura	10.00	22.50	67.08	115.71	215.29
Common to N..	—	9.00	9.46	—	18.46
TOTAL:	121.95	419.92	313.04	491.81	1346.72

An inter-ministerial consultation process has since been initiated to make an assessment regarding amounts to be contributed by the various Ministries to the Central Pool during the previous four financial years.

(b) to (d) There is no formal proposal to this effect. However, Chief Minister, Assam in his D.O. letter dated March 8, 2002 has intimated that the Public Works Department, Assam was proposing to form a Society with the Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads) heading the society and the funds provided will come under Direct Payment System as was prevailing in the ARIASP (World Bank) works.

Formulation of National Slum Policy

*679. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister had convened a meeting of Chief Ministers and Housing and Urban Development Ministers of all States for formulation of the National Slum Policy;

(b) if so, the number of Chief Ministers attended the meeting;

(c) the main issues discussed therein;

(d) whether any formulation of the National Slum Policy was considered; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Clearance of medical claims

*680. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM:
SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of medical reimbursement claims of Government pensioners received in his Ministry under the CGHS relating to the period 1st January, 2002 to 31st March, 2002 could not be cleared by 31st March, 2002;